

## A SURE THING

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The job offer came as another late season storm took aim at winter-weary Buffalo. Faced with the prospect of more snow, Rocco Sakarian only had one question for the caller: “Where’s the hit?”

He’d heard of Oklahoma, thought there was a song about it, but had never been there. Wasn’t even sure if it was in the south or the west. He ignored the voice squawking from his cellphone and pulled up the Oklahoma weather report. The state’s forecast high temperature sealed the deal.

With thoughts of clear sixty-degree days clouding his judgment, Rocco didn’t question why someone wanted him to kill an eighty-year-old cattle rancher. A job was a job. No worries about confronting a marathon runner, a weightlifter, or a tech- savvy millennial. It was a sure thing.

The prospective client went into justification mode, as they all did, so Rocco switched his phone to speaker, lowered the volume, and settled in to watch the live-action pinball game outside his front window. While a snowplow worked its way up the street, moving a mixture of dirty and newly fallen snow onto parked cars and sidewalks, the rival rancher spewed out complaints about Abigail Hawkins.

“...don’t underestimate her,” the voice said. “It has to be done before her kids get back in town on Sunday. You got that?”

Rocco pumped a fist when the plow slammed into a car.

The voice bellowed from the phone. “Hey, you still there?”

“Still here,” Rocco said. “Heard every word. No worries. Gotta plan.”